

# 19th BCD re-deploys home to Ramstein

by Chief Warrant Officer Three

John A. Robinson

19th Battlefield Coordination Detachment

The 19th Battlefield Coordination Detachment returned to Ramstein recently, after a one-year deployment to the Central Command Air Forces' Combined Air Operations Center in Southwest Asia.

The Soldiers reflected on a year's worth of experiences – charged with the unique mission of coordination of air support for ground forces of operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom, during which they were responsible for coordinating air strikes in the Global War on Terrorism.

"Our job was to translate green-speak to Blue-speak," said Lt. Col. Carl Giles, plans chief. "We've been the liaison between ground forces that need airpower and air forces that can provide that air power."

The translating went both ways.

"I would explain Army and Marine Corps terminology and missions to my air operations counterparts, which would help the air component plan and synchronize their crew schedules," said Sgt. 1st Class Timothy Evans, operations NCO. "Then we would relay the air plan back to the ground components."

The BCD embeds Soldiers throughout the CAOC, in order to seamlessly integrate all

facets of ground operations with ongoing air operations.

"We were helping the air intelligence community better understand the ground picture, so they could provide better support," said Maj. Marion Johnson, acting intelligence chief.

"Many of the air intelligence personnel come from positions other than those they are tasked to work in the ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance Division) for the duration of their 120-day deployment."

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NCO in charge of airlift

"We're there for a year, while most of the air folks rotate in for shorter periods," added Spc. Joseph Lucketta, intelligence analyst. "We provide the continuity between one AEF rotation and the next."

Overall, BCD Soldiers were uniform in their appreciation for the opportunity to work in a combined and joint environment. The CENTAF CAOC has ample representation

from the four sister services, as well as numerous coalition allies.

"It's great to work in a combined environment," said Sgt. 1st Class Timothy Werstein, NCO in charge of airlift. "It's clearly the wave of the future."

The uniqueness of the BCD mission extended to the coordination of all airspace for both Iraq and Afghanistan.

"We accommodated the counterinsurgency environments by integrating Army and Air Force needs into a seamless service for all," said Capt. Bill Pontes, airspace chief. "What's more, we had to integrate civilian air traffic needs into the plan for Iraq and help integrate their growing Air Force. The balance we created is helping them to create their own version of our FAA [Federal Aviation Administration] and has easily saved millions of dollars in the process."

The volumes of lessons learned won't be cast aside, now that the BCD has re-deployed.

"We look forward to sharing this valuable learning experience with USAREUR and USAFE (U.S. Air Forces in Europe) units," said Col. Jim Waring, BCD commander. "We've already begun, by supporting the V Corps train-ups, as they prepare to take the next mission in OIF. Right now, we're looking forward to reintegrating with our supported air component, the 32nd Air Operations Group, here at Ramstein."



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